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MEMBERS' RECEPTION

THE President and Trustees of the Museum will receive the members and their friends on Tuesday evening, January 16, at half past eight o'clock. There will be music by an orchestra under the direction of David Mannes of the Philharmonic Society.

MEMORIAL EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS OF WILLIAM M. CHASE

A MEMORIAL loan exhibition of the works of the late William Merritt Chase will be held in the Museum during the later part of the winter.

At a meeting of the Trustees held on November 20 the President appointed the following Committee on Arrangements: Charles W. Gould, *Chairman*, Herbert Adams, Carroll Beckwith, Bryson Burroughs, Kenyon Cox, Frederick Dielman, Thomas W. Dewing, Daniel C. French, Francis C. Jones, Will H. Low, Frederick W. MacMonnies, Edward Robinson, John S. Sargent, J. Alden Weir, and Irving R. Wiles. This committee will have the full coöperation and assistance of Mrs. Chase, with whose approval the exhibition is being arranged.

The exact date of opening cannot yet be fixed, but it will probably be early in February, and the exhibition will continue for about a month. A private view will be given to the members of the Museum on the day before the public opening. Further particulars will be announced in a later number of the BULLETIN.

Such an exhibition will give the New York public and others the privilege of seeing pictures painted by Mr. Chase during different periods of his career and thus of appreciating his large and varied accomplishment as an artist.

For over forty years William Merritt Chase was among the most prominent of American painters. His career began in the time of transition when after a comparative isolation of half a century American art again became cognizant of European standards. His talents and enthusiasm

immediately won him a place in the van of those who were instrumental in bringing about the change. A very distinct ideal of what constitutes sound workmanship, comprising direct brush handling, frank color, and free drawing, combined with a distaste for literary or poetic subtleties, made up his conception of good painting. To this ideal he was unswervingly loyal, and within its bounds his admirations were generous and outspoken, were they for well-known artists like Leibl, Stevens, Sargent, or Vollon, or for some young painter whose name had been entirely unfamiliar until he saw it on a canvas which pleased him. Many artists since generally recognized have had from him their first considerable encouragement, for he was frequently a buyer of their pictures.

In his own work his interest was in anything he could have before him as he painted—figures, still lifes, interiors, landscapes. The five pictures by him which belong to the Museum are of the first two sorts. The *Lady in Black*, painted about 1890, and *The Portrait of a Lady*, dated 1911, are shown in Gallery 20. The *Seventeenth-Century Lady* and a large *Still Life*, both of about 1905, are in Gallery 15. *Carmencita*, a portrait of a Spanish dancer who created a furore in New York about 1890, is among a group of pictures lent by the Museum to the Bronx Society of Arts and Sciences.

WILLIAM M. CHASE AS A TEACHER

WILLIAM M. CHASE proved himself the "richly inspiring, wise, and magnetic teacher," as he has been characterized, when on the fifteenth of last January he talked informally in the Lecture Hall of the Museum to a large and enthusiastic company of the art students of New York. Fortunately a stenographic report of his words was made, and thus we are able to pass on to a still larger audience the following extracts, which so well reveal the personality of the speaker:

"Students, let me hark back to the time when I first saw the works by the masters. A youngster—and a very fresh one—when

I first reached Munich I went to the gallery where the old masters were; and I distinctly remember that on that day I thought it was all nonsense—that these dark, terrible things were not all they were claimed to be. I thought that seriously. The next thought I had was: 'There must be a reason why all these things are here, and so cherished and so placed and so guarded as they are.'

"I entered the school and did my lessons the best I could, and was advised to go occasionally to the museum. I did not much care to go, but I did go. I am so glad I did not tell my first impressions about those paintings. Before I knew it a spell came over me. My preference in the beginning was Carlo Dolci. Then there were other painters I was in love with. Many of the others I disliked, heartily disliked, and so I went to the pictures I loved and I drank them in to the fullest extent, and when I went away I went consoled with the thought that I cared for a picture that was in the museum.

"My experience is identical with that which you have all experienced already and will continue to experience as you progress. It is with painting just as it is when one acquires any other branch of knowledge. All we have has come to us by easy degrees, beginning with the easy parts and advancing by easy stages, and coming to know better and better, through association, the things we come in contact with.

"My advice to my students is that in going into a gallery they go directly to the picture they care most for and drink it in! And then I tell them that on one occasion when abroad I stood on an iron grating in front of a store and got frost-bitten toes drinking in the spirit of a chromo.

"The real student, the art student, could not do better than to select one work in a museum. Go directly to that picture and stand in front of it and help yourself, with a view to getting from it all that you possibly can. Drink it in to the fullest. Then go to your studio, take your picture with you in your mind's eye, and imitate it, and exist in it. When you have done that, when you have absorbed all you can

get from that one picture, then you are ready for something else.

"In reality, a picture exhibition is impossible—a gallery of pictures is impossible unless it is a one-man exhibit; that is, all the paintings by one man. Where pictures are simultaneously placed and different masters represented, it is as unreasonable to stand there and hope to get anything from it as it is to go and stand in a room where twenty different airs are being played and expect to get any satisfaction from the medley.

"Students, this museum is of more concern to you than to any one else, because of the possibility that through you another name may be added to the list of great art workers. All the books you may read, all the art lectures you may listen to have nothing to do with that, and they cannot be compared with the actual work which you can see with your eyes and drink in as it is before you.

"Pursue your profession and calling so long as it is a delight to you, and so long as you cannot help it, despite all conditions. I have so many people come to me to know whether I feel the students they are interested in are really warranted in continuing the study. My question is always, 'Do they wish to do it?' and they reply, as a rule, 'You cannot get them to do anything else.' Then I say, 'Leave them alone. Encourage them the best you can. No harm is done. If they fail, as you hope they will, their pleasure in their life and what they come in contact with will compensate for all their failures. The added joy which they will get out of life and their surroundings will pay for any amount of failure. Their life is then worth living.'

"I am sometimes taken to task for encouraging students today. Why not? There is no harm done. They are not the kind it will harm. The real, real art student, interested, keenly interested in his work, is not the kind who will bury himself in a stupid newspaper in a railway train. He sees things outside. Everything that conduces to the happiness of existence coincides with just what we are doing. That is absolutely so. I believe I am the

father of more art children than any other living man, and they are a well-behaved lot—really! It is one of my consolations in life that wherever I go I see my children, and some of them really care to see me. Do you know why? I know. It is because I am keenly in sympathy with every effort they make. I think there is nothing in the world which takes the place of what is termed the 'kindred spirit.'

"I have never had any use for the little ones—the small men—but I have always aimed to associate with one who would add a thought to those I entertained myself, and a thought of an encouraging kind or nature. I have always been afraid to go to bed in a discouraged frame of mind. For one picture which I placed my name on, I have destroyed ten, and that means, students, that many times I have gone to bed with a sore and aching heart, with a feeling of 'What is the use of it all?' And then there was a time when I got out of bed anticipating failure. You must not do that. I am writing a little booklet, and one of the things I say is, 'Never anticipate a failure or you will meet it.' So, when I got out of bed to anticipate a failure, I said, 'I am going to do a masterpiece today.'

"There is nothing in the world like work. Fortunately, in our calling there is nothing so entertaining, no workmanship that can compare with the fascination of our calling, and this is especially true if in your student work you are working in a school, and the work you are doing is not a commission and is not meant for an exhibition. What a sense of freedom, a delightful fascination of freedom, to concentrate upon the work which is to fit you for the future! I would say to myself, 'William, see that every day you make a deposit which you can draw upon in the future. It is just as if you made a deposit in a bank. And remember that a failure is a deposit to show you what you cannot afford to do again.'

"Students, upon entering this great building, cut out as best you can any prejudice, any preference, and come into the building with an open, free mind and accept the things as you find them. Keep yourself in as receptive a state of mind

as possible, and be like a sponge, ready to absorb all you can. And let me say here, I have been a thief, I have stolen all my life. I have never been so foolish and foolhardy as to refrain from stealing for fear I should be considered as not 'original.' Originality is found in the greatest composite which you can bring together.

"In coming to the galleries here, select the right kind of companions. The ideal companion will be one who with a touch of the arm in front of a picture will convey his thought. That touch of the arm will suffice. It is better not to say much at all. Large discussion is needless, useless, harmful. The main thing is to get a companion who is in harmony and in sympathy. A successful picture needs no explanation. I could not have said it better if I had thought for one month on that sentence. A really fine work needs no explanation.

"I think there is no place where you hear such extraordinary and highly amusing things said as in a picture gallery. The harshest criticism—the very harshest—is when you hear it said, 'What a lot of time it took him to do that.' The successful work is not of that kind—it looks as if it had been blown upon the canvas, and entirely without effort.

"One always remains a student; and every new canvas I have had was the rarest opportunity to make that the best I have ever done. I have just made a portrait of myself standing with a blank canvas in front of me. This is to be my masterpiece. The ideal and the aim of it all, I believe, is that you can remain young all the time to the end; always be a fresh fighter, ambitious to the end. If it ever becomes tiresome to me to paint, I will do something else.

"You who are studying art have the most dignified profession in the world. Your opportunity to leave a record is wonderful and rare, and I plead with you to see to it that you leave a record of having been on this earth. What the people and the public and the world demand of you is that you will put yourself upon that canvas. What we really want to know is the personality of the painter, not the paint on the canvas."